

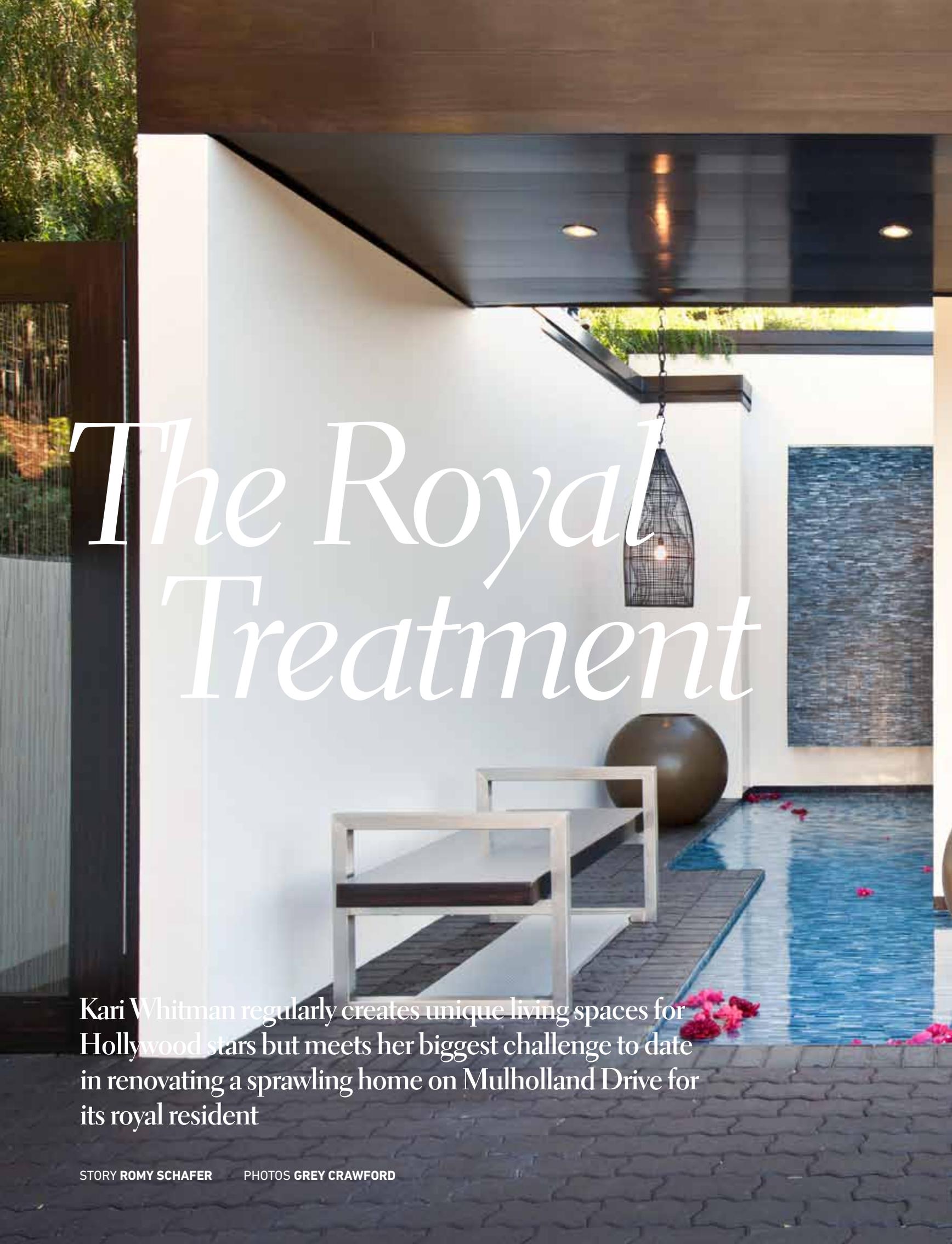
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LUXURY
HOME
QUARTERLY

Pacific Palace

Kari Whitman rolls out the red carpet for this regal L.A. pad

A modern outdoor spa area featuring a pool with pink rose petals floating in it. A metal bench with a dark seat is positioned on a dark tiled deck. A large, dark, spherical object sits on the deck near the pool. A hanging lantern with a wire mesh shade is suspended from the ceiling. The background shows a white wall and a large window or glass door. The overall aesthetic is clean and contemporary.

The Royal Treatment

Kari Whitman regularly creates unique living spaces for Hollywood stars but meets her biggest challenge to date in renovating a sprawling home on Mulholland Drive for its royal resident







Ever since launching her firm in 1994, interior designer Kari Whitman has been creating personalized, private spaces for well-known, public figures from coast to coast. Appearing in her star-studded portfolio are projects for such celebrities as Jessica Alba, Virginia Madsen, Kristen Bell, Don Johnson and Emilio Estevez.

It was a friend and fellow actor, in fact, who gave Whitman her first job as a designer, after hiring the former actress to appear in a movie that he was directing. “He always loved the little put-together apartments that I had when I was struggling as an actress,” Whitman explains.

Some 20 years later, this celebrity remains on Whitman’s client list, which now also includes commercial clients ranging from boutique hotels to large-scale residential projects, like Park La Brea, a 4,000-unit apartment complex in Los Angeles’ historic Miracle Mile district. The designer acknowledges, however, that residential projects are her passion.

Given Whitman’s acting background and large celebrity client base, it was only natural that the designer would eventually expand into television. To date, she has been host of Women’s Entertainment (WE) TV network’s “Designer to the Stars: Kari Whitman,” a featured celebrity interior designer on The Discovery Channel’s “The Dude Room” and a special correspondent on “TODAY,” “Entertainment Tonight” and “Access Hollywood.”

01

Glass from Pulp Studio Glass (pulpstudio.com) plays prominently in the home’s front exterior. Mosaic glass tiles by Imperial Stone (lookimperial.com) welcome visitors.

02

The entrance features Onyx slabs by quality tile works. Woodwork from Daniel Clavin (daniel-clavin.com) and front door from New City Door (newcitydoor.com).

03

The living room is a glamorous retreat ideal for entertaining. Custom sectional sofa by Kari Whitman, wall finishes by Gorgeous Homes, Vintage cargo plane door from Habite (habite.com) and woodwork by Daniel Clavin (www.danielclavin.com) complete the space.





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04

The metallic wall finish by Gorgeous Homes, Inc. (gorgeoushomes.org) and ceiling wallpaper by Donghia enhance the dining room's lighting, also by Donghia (donghia.com).

05

Hand blown vintage lights by 20th Century Lighting (20thcenturylighting.com) and wall art by Perrell Fine Art (perrellfineart.com) set an artful tone upon entrance into the home.

Whitman is in negotiation right now with a major TV network to produce a show focusing on green design, one of the self-professed tree-hugger's passions. "I was green before green was cool," says the Boulder, Colorado native.

It was a magazine article about Whitman's home renovation for actress Jessica Alba, however, that garnered the designer her most challenging job to date: completely re-working an 8,000-square-foot house situated on Los Angeles' legendary Mulholland Drive. "The clients had seen [the article] and liked what I did on her home, so they hired me," she explains. "They're from a royal family; they're just really amazing people and very artistic."

The house's primary occupant, a 21-year-old family member and student at a nearby university, asked Whitman to create a place with a "masculine vibe" where he could relax and entertain friends. His request resulted in a year-and-a-half-long project that involved extensive interior and exterior construction, including moving a shear wall. "I like to take on big projects," Whitman acknowledges. "I usually don't take on just one room unless it's something like an elaborate kitchen."

Creating an upscale, modern kitchen was just one of a myriad of spaces the designer-builder and construction specialist was charged with completely reinventing. Her transformation started at the home's entrance, which she turned into a floating entry that enables visitors to walk on water. A stepping stone path spans a cobalt blue mosaic pool made from recycled glass and leads to a 10-foot-tall, custom-built front door from New City Door.

Inside the entry hall, two illuminated, 500-pound slabs of onyx were installed. Whitman also created a chic powder room featuring walls clad in 9 x 12 in. silver-leaf-backed glass tiles from Ann Sacks Tile & Stone and an eco-friendly, high-efficiency toilet from TOTO USA.

The designer used neutral-colored faux leather and Ultrasuede® fabric on walls and custom furniture to give the spacious living room a masculine, yet warm and inviting, feel. Metallic cork wallpaper from Astek Inc., a large geometric-patterned area rug from è bella and a custom light box from Fire Farm Lighting further enhance the room's manly look, as does a vintage, rolling cargo door that opens to reveal the library. Whitman discovered the 1950's airplane part at Habite, a Los Angeles store that specializes in antique furnishings.

The adjoining formal dining room, which Whitman says is one of her favorite spaces, features what she considers to be the residence's masterpiece— "window walls" crafted from 3,000 small pieces of recycled wood. Designed by Whitman and constructed by contractor-and-finish carpenter Daniel Clavin, the elegant, peek-throughs add privacy to the room, while letting in natural light and enabling the homeowner to enjoy the stunning outdoor views. A sleek, rectangular light fixture from Donghia Inc. complements the peek-throughs' geometric design.







07

06

Silver-leafed tile by Ann Sacks (annsacks.com) in the powder room. Lights by Paul Marra (paulmarradesign.com) and tables from Jarlath Mellett (jarlathmellett.com) add charm and function.

07

The fire pit was fabricated by Milo Marble and Tile, and features sectional seating designed by Kari Whitman and fabricated by Nadia of Casabella for You (casabellaforyou.com).

A large, pivoting glass door, meanwhile, provides access to the kitchen. Fabricated by Romanoski Glass and Mirror Co. Inc., it features leaves pressed between sheets of glass, a fitting design for a kitchen filled with custom cabinets made from recycled and sustainable woods, high-end stainless steel appliances and top-of-the-line, shell-flecked granite.

Of course, for most people, part of the appeal of living in southern California is being able to dine and entertain outdoors most of the year, and Whitman's client was no exception. Consequently, she included large folding doors on one side of the kitchen to provide easy access to the outdoor living area, to which she added a recycled, glass mosaic water wall and swimming pool (both were installed by Milo Marble & Tile Co.), a fire pit, kitchen and dining areas, custom-made pool and dining furniture.

To make the outdoor living spaces even more eco-friendly, Whitman installed ProLawn synthetic turf on the south side of the home to save water and eliminate the need for pesticides. She also selected plant material that will thrive in southern California's climate. "I handpicked every single tree," she says. "I really enjoyed taking on the horticultural and arborist aspects. If I didn't do interior design, I'd definitely do some kind of landscape architecture."

Right now, she's happy to continue doing both. ■

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A MESSAGE FROM ACOUSTICAL FABRIC SYSTEMS, INC.

AFS would like to thank Kari Whitman, for the opportunity given to our company to work in her creation; AFS is here to give life to any designers' creation and to provide high quality work.

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